

Collaboration Redefined: Three New Capabilities Help Transform Government

How can government meet increasing citizen expectations, let alone with today's reduced, mobile workforce? The ability to reach across barriers of time and distance to collaborate in the right context plays an increasingly important role. "Effective government relies on connecting those who know the right information with those who need to know it—securely, in a timely fashion, and at their point of need," says Gerald Charles, Jr., director of the Internet Business Systems Group, Cisco. "It can't matter whether team members are working at home, in the field, in transit, in a different agency, or even on a different continent."

Three new unified communications tools help to enhance collaboration within and between agencies and improve workforce and citizen interactions. These are: interagency presence and instant messaging, Web 2.0 collaboration spaces, and Cisco TelePresence for citizen interaction with government.

Interagency Presence and Instant Messaging

Presence information helps reclaim the considerable time that government employees traditionally spend calling each other on multiple devices, only to reach voicemail. Instead, they can consult coworkers' presence information on their IP phone or laptop to see if coworkers are available right now and how they prefer to be reached.

Now agencies can securely exchange presence information and instant messages with partner agencies, as well—a new capability in Cisco® Unified Communications System 7.0, released in September 2008. "Suppose an interagency task force is working on a project," says David Rubal, regional manager for Unified Communications, Cisco. "Rather than trading voicemails to get information or make a decision, team members can look to see which team member is currently available, and then call or send an instant message for an immediate response. Faster decision-making translates to greater agility in government."

Interagency presence can also improve citizen interaction because an employee who transfers a citizen's call to an expert in another agency can first make sure the other party is available.

Web 2.0 Collaboration

A new generation of web-savvy government workers expect their agencies to provide the same collaboration tools available in the private sector. Of particular interest are Web 2.0 technologies, which enable workers to not just consume information, but also to share it in wikis, discussion groups, chat sessions, and other interactive forums. "Citizens can check their friends' real-time status on social networking sites and send an instant message," says Rubal. "Why not let agency employees see their coworkers' status and just click to start an instant messaging session? And if citizens can search the entire web in a few seconds, why not make it easier for task force members to find shared documents in team folders?"

Cisco WebEx Connect enables collaboration within and between agencies by providing a single interface that ties together all of an agency's essential collaboration applications: click-to-call, instant messaging, team spaces, document management, discussions, and wikis. Employees can also use the same interface to manage their Microsoft Outlook email and calendar and to securely exchange documents with Microsoft SharePoint. And agency IT groups can easily link up other applications so that they are available in the same place.

To support government continuity of operations (COOP) plans, Cisco will soon release a web-based version of WebEx Connect that employees can use to collaborate with their virtual teams from home. A smartphone version for mobile government workers is scheduled for release in early 2010.

TelePresence Expert on Demand

New collaboration applications also enhance citizen interaction. With Cisco TelePresence Expert on Demand, for example, citizens who need information can visit any nearby government office that has a Cisco TelePresence setup. They just press a button on a Cisco Unified IP Phone to indicate the nature of their request and connect with an available government expert in any location. The citizen and government representative see each other in life size, with ultra-high-resolution that makes the interaction seem face to face. The Expert on Demand solution provides value to any agency that interacts directly with citizens, such as the Social Security Administration, Internal Revenue Service, Federal Emergency Management Administration, or State Department of Motor Vehicles.

Rubal concludes, "Collaboration is the foundation of government goals to empower the workforce, improve citizen interaction, and become more agile. The network is the platform for powerful new collaboration tools that overcome the barriers of time, distance, and organization."

Find Out More

To read more about the interagency presence and instant messaging capabilities in Cisco Unified Communications 7.0, visit: www.cisco.com/go/unifiedworkspace

To watch a video on WebEx Connect, visit:
www.webex.com/enterprise/cisco-webex-connect.html

To read more about Cisco TelePresence Expert on Demand, visit:
www.cisco.com/en/US/products/ps7060/index.html



Americas Headquarters
Cisco Systems, Inc.
San Jose, CA

Asia Pacific Headquarters
Cisco Systems (USA) Pte. Ltd.
Singapore

Europe Headquarters
Cisco Systems International BV
Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Cisco has more than 200 offices worldwide. Addresses, phone numbers, and fax numbers are listed on the Cisco Website at www.cisco.com/go/offices.

CCDE, CCVP, Cisco Eos, Cisco StadiumVision, the Cisco logo, DCE, and Welcome to the Human Network are trademarks.; Changing the Way We Work, Live, Play, and Learn is a service mark; and Access Registrar, Aironet, AsyncOS, Bringing the Meeting To You, Catalyst, CCDA, CCDP, CCIE, CCIP, CCNA, CCNP, CCSP, Cisco, the Cisco Certified Internetwork Expert logo, Cisco IOS, Cisco Press, Cisco Systems, Cisco Systems Capital, the Cisco Systems logo, Cisco Unity, Collaboration Without Limitation, Enterprise/Solver, EtherChannel, EtherFast, EtherSwitch, Event Center, Fast Step, Follow Me Browsing, FormShare, GigaDrive, HomeLink, Internet Quotient, IOS, iPhone, IP/TV, iQ Expertise, the iQ logo, iQ Net Readiness Scorecard, iQuick Study, IronPort, the IronPort logo, LightStream, Linksys, MediaTone, MeetingPlace, MGX, Networkers, Networking Academy, Network Registrar, PCNow, PIX, PowerPanels, ProConnect, ScriptShare, SenderBase, SMARTnet, Spectrum Expert, StackWise, The Fastest Way to Increase Your Internet Quotient, TransPath, WebEx, and the WebEx logo are registered trademarks of Cisco Systems, Inc. and/or its affiliates in the United States and certain other countries.

All other trademarks mentioned in this document or Website are the property of their respective owners. The use of the word partner does not imply a partnership relationship between Cisco and any other company. (0801R)